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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2009

Media Highlights: Armenian Diaspora and Turkey-Armenia
Normalization; Israel and Anatolian Eagle Exercise: Cancelled
or Postponed?; President Gul on the EU; Iran and P5+1; Afghanistan;
Banned Internet Sites Reach 1,209

Armenian Diaspora: "Sarkisian will either postpone the signing of the protocols or reject it"
All media outlets continue to give prominent coverage on Turkey-Armenia normalization process and issues related to it. Mainstream Hurriyet draws attention to the claims of Armenian Diaspora regarding the protocol signing between Turkey and Armenia. Holding a press conference in Yerevan, Yerevan representative of the "US Armenian Assembly" Arpi Vartanyan claimed that following the conclusion of his meetings with Diaspora, President Sarkisian will either postpone the date to sign the protocol with Turkey or will reject the full text. Mainstream Sabah notes that visiting Lebanon to calm concerns among members of Armenian Diaspora over Turkish-Armenian efforts to normalize relations, President Sargsyan faced a hostile reception in Beirut as well. Addressing the Armenian community in Beirut, Sargsyan said "continuation of the status quo will have negative impact on Turkey and Armenia. Following the improved diplomatic ties with Turkey, a positive atmosphere will be established at our bilateral meetings. I believe that the Diaspora's concerns are very objective, however, they should not prevent improved relations with Turkey. Diaspora had given similar reactions when Armenia had declared independence. Our belief is full that we will reach a solution." Meanwhile, speaking to Wall Street Journal, PM Erdogan urged Sargsyan government to stand strong against Diaspora's reactions and not to allow Diaspora to determine Armenian policies instead of Armenian government." Erdogan added that Turkey is ready to sign the protocol in its current form.

"The Diaspora Does not Have a Single Voice." In mainstream Milliyet, Semih Idiz observes two groups within the Diaspora; hardliners and relatively moderate ones and expects a positive phase regardless of the protests that Sarkisian has been facing: "Despite all types of opposition, those who support normalization with Turkey are strong enough to proceed. In the end, protocols are expected to be passed by the Armenian parliament." A similar positive expectation comes from Taha Akyol in the same paper: "Even though no official

announcement is available, there will be a protocol signing in Zurich on October 10. It may be kept as a low profile event in order not to provoke the Diaspora." The writer adds however "what is more important is whether or not Sarkisian will come for the match."

In mainstream Sabah, Erdal Safak observes a major difference between state-to-state and people-to-people rapprochement in an article "States and Peoples": "When the two states make up, it does not mean their people will automatically do the same. The Turkish and Armenian administrations should work on a comprehensive public education and awareness strategy otherwise Turkish-Armenia normalization does not go beyond the Egypt-Israel peace."

'Anatolian Eagle' military exercises cancelled or postponed
Papers report the international part of the Anatolian Eagle military exercises scheduled to take place this month in Konya was either "canceled" or "postponed." First reported on mainstream Hurriyet's website on October 7, today's mainstream Milliyet says the annulment came as an expression of Turkish reactions to the Israeli attacks on Gaza and in deference to its neighbors. The paper points out also that Prime Minister Erdogan was expected to visit Iran this month and that Turkey and Syria were working on an agreement for lifting mutual visa requirements for visitors. The annulment of the exercises has been perceived as a Turkish message for the two countries, comments Milliyet. Mainstream Aksam, however, says the cancellation came as a "surprise." The paper claims that Israel who told Turkey that it would not participate in the exercises this year. The other countries followed suit, and said they would not participate either, says Aksam.

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Meanwhile Turkish General Staff posted an official announcement in its web site at 6:00 am saying that international participation is postponed: "International participation being postponed as a result of the contacts between related countries through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

President Gul to EU: "Perhaps we will not want EU as Norway did"
Today's papers highlighted the message of President Gul to the EU, prior to his departure for France. Milliyet quotes Gul as saying "some countries preparing to hold referendum on Turkey's EU accession. Turkey is ready to show respect for the outcome of the referendum. Perhaps when that day comes, Turkey and Turkish people will not prefer full membership and follow Norway's decision regarding the EU membership." Responding to a question whether Sargsyan would attend the football game in Bursa on October 14, Gul said "You all know that I went to the game in Armenia without any conditions, I hope that Sargsyan will do the same thing. I invited him and want to show him our hospitality, as he kindly hosted us there," notes Sabah.

"Iran Plays a Game"

Turkish pundit Kadri Gursel observes "Negotiation Game in Geneva" by Iran. In mainstream Milliyet, he worries: "The Geneva negotiation process received appreciation but the fact of the matter is the two negotiating sides have entirely different game plans as if they speak on two different languages. The ultimate goal for the P5+1 is to have Iran stop its nuclear program while Iran is using this platform as a time-gainer until it finalizes the nuclear strategy."

Afghanistan's Destiny Tied To Two Books. (Hurriyet)
Mainstream Hurriyet says, "the two bestsellers, 'Lessons in Disaster' and 'A Better War', play a significant role on the debate on the US strategy in Afghanistan. The paper reports, "the two books cite Vietnamese War and takes different lessons from the war." According to the paper, President Obama's favorite 'Lessons in Disaster' tells how army drags politicians to a war 'that can't be won' and how the White House can't see this danger. Whereas, in McCain's favorite 'A Better War', army finds a way to win and the final is different than the reality.

1,209 websites banned in Turkey (Milliyet)
According to the Turkish Telecommunications Board, the state entity for providing the internet, access to 1,209 websites were banned in

Turkey during the November 2007-January 2009 period. Some 317 websites were banned over sexual exploitation of children, 77 over gambling, 54 over placement of bets, 553 over obscenity, 28 over offenses that had been committed against Ataturk, and 164 over "catalogue crimes," reports Milliyet.

"If You Don't Like It, Just Close It Down": In mainstream HaberTurk, columnist Dogan Satmis criticized the ongoing internet bans and noted they are mostly administrative actions instead of a court ruling: "Closing down a web site due to court decision has a logic in it because at least the site owner can try every judicial step to reverse the decision. However in Turkey's case, 5 out of 6 banned internet sites are administrative action which means, you can only defend yourself against the bureaucracy if you dare. It seems Turkey, at the end of day, will neither be a member of EU nor be a full democratic country."

Upcoming events:

Q October 9: French President Sarkozy will host a working lunch for Visiting Turkish President Gul.

Q October 10-11: The 12th International Balkan Conference, attended by 40 Balkan leaders, will be held in Istanbul to discuss Turkey-EU relations.

Q October 14: The EU will release its "progress report" on Turkey. Some Turkish papers predict that the report will extensively cover

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the current tax challenges to the Dogan Media Group and its implications for a free press in Turkey.

JEFFREY